

Message Text

PAGE 01 TOKYO 07229 021140Z

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SUBJECT: JNR MANAGEMENT AND UNIONS ACHIEVE AGREEMENT ON RIGHT TO STRIKE ISSUE

SUMMARY. AFTER EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH UNIONS, JAPANESE NATIONAL RAILWAYS (JNR) MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCED EXTREMELY LIGHT PUNITIVE ACTIONS AGAINST LEADERS OF 1973, 1974 AND 1975 STRIKES. KOKURO AND DORO UNIONS STAGED WORK-TO-RULE GO-SLOW ACTIONS, BUT PUBLICLY APPLAUDED APPARENT MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE THAT IT WILL RECOMMEND RESTORATION OF RIGHT TO STRIKE TO JNR WORKERS. JNR MANAGEMENT AND UNIONS BOTH WOULD LIKE TO END COSTLY, PERENNIAL STRIKE RIGHTS BATTLE. ALSO, MANAGEMENT WOULD WELCOME UNION ACQUIESCENCE IN ITS REQUEST FOR A LARGE FARE INCREASE. END SUMMARY.

1. JAPANESE NATIONAL RAILWAYS AUTHORITIES MAY 31 ANNOUNCED PUNITIVE ACTIONS AGAINST 9,089 UNIONISTS, DISMISSING 19 FOR STAGING STRIKES IN 1973, 1974, AND 1975. PUNISHMENT ACTIONS WERE TAKEN AFTER EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH TWO UNIONS INVOLVED AND WERE EXTREMELY LIGHT. DISCHARGE OF 19 UNIONISTS FOR STRIKES OVER ALMOST TWOYEAR PERIOD COMPARED WITH 68 DISMISSED FOR STOPPAGE IN 1971 SPRING LABOR OFFENSIVE, 43 FOR SIMILAR UPHEAVAL IN 1972 AND 50 FOR LIKE ACTION IN SPRING 1973. DISMISSALS AND UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 TOKYO 07229 021140Z

OTHER PUNITIVE ACTIONS THIS TIME SPANNED FALL 1973, SPRING AND FALL 1974 AND SPRING 1975 LABOR STOPPAGES.

2. KOKURO (NATIONAL RAILWAY WORKERS UNION; 232,000) AND DORO

(NATIONAL RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS UNION; 46,000) CALLED OFF THREATENED JUNE 1 STRIKE OVER PUNISHMENT ISSUE, T STAGED WORK-TO-RULE GO-SLOW ACTIONS MAY 31 THROUGH JUNE 2 WHICH CAUSED SLIGHT INCONVENIENCE, CENTRAL TO RELATIVELY CALM UNION ACCEPTANCE OF PUNITIVE ACTIONS WAS CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE OF JNR MANAGEMENT, WHICH IS LEGALLY BOUND TO PUNISH STRIKE LEADERS. JNR UNION LEADERS SAY THEY HAVE BEEN ASSURED PRIVATELY BY TOP JNR OFFICIALS THAT JNR MANAGEMENT WILL ADVOCATE RESTORATION OF RIGHT TO STRIKE TO JNR WORKERS AT JUNE 26 MEETING OF CABINET MINISTERS DELIBERATING POSSIBILITY OF RESTORING RIGHT TO STRIKE TO WORKERS IN STAGE ENTERPRISES. GOJ HAS PLEDGED THAT CABINET GIVUP DEBATING STRIKE RIGHTS ISSUE WILL DELIVER FINAL REPORT BEFORE AUTUMN 1975. CONTROVERSIAL BAN ON PUBLIC SECTOR STRIKES WAS LEGISLATED IN 1948 IN WAKE OF IMMEDIATE POST-WAR PUBLIC TRANSPORT SECTOR LABOR TURBULENCE.

3. COMMENT. IT IS WIDELY SPECULATED THAT MANAGEMENT OF DEFICIT-RIDDEN JNR IS SEEKING BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH UNIONS SO THAT IT CAN GAIN UNION AND SOHYO-BACKED SOCIALIST PARTY UNDERSTANDING OF NEED FOR DRASTIC FARE INCREASE. FARE INCREASE MUST BE APPROVED BY DIET AND HAPPIER UNION LEADERS COULD MODERATE TRADITIONAL SOHYO AND JSP OPPOSITION TO TRANSPORTATION FEE INCREASES. ALTHOUGH FEW, IF ANY, OBSERVERS BELIEVE JNR WILL GET FULL 125 PERCENT INCREASE NEEDED TO BALANCE BOOKS, UNION AND JSP ACQUIESCENCE COULD BOLSTER SIZE OF INCREASE FINALLY APPROVED. EQUALLY IMPORTANT, BOTH JNR UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT WANT TO BREAK CYCLE

OF STRIKES, PUNITIVE ACTIONS AND STRIKES PROTESTING PUNITIVE ACTIONS WHICH ARE COSTLY TO BOTH SIDES. ALSO IN BACKGROUND IS MIKI GOVERNMENT'S CONCILIATORY POLICY TOWARD PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS. HODGSON

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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